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General Assembly

Official Records

Sixty-third session

82nd plenary meeting
Friday, 8 May 2009, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Agenda item 31 (*continued*)

Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/63/402/Add.1)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) which is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/63/402/Add.1), I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), unless notified otherwise in advance.

The General Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) in paragraph 6 of its report. The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/280).

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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Please recycle

I give the floor to the representative of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Palouš (Czech Republic): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. At the outset, I would like to thank you, Sir, for your opening remarks and take this opportunity to reaffirm the European Union's strong support to the United Nations in the field of peacekeeping.

Despite some difficulties observed in United Nations peacekeeping during the past few years, the European Union considers United Nations peacekeeping to be not only the most visible United Nations activity, but also an effective factor for ensuring security, protecting civilians and providing humanitarian assistance. Nevertheless, nearly a decade after the Brahimi report, it is time to revisit the Panel's recommendations, review their implementation and look strategically into future United Nations peacekeeping challenges.

In that regard, I would like to seize this opportunity to present the European Union member States' perspective on the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) outcomes. The European Union considers the timely adoption of the C-34 report (A/63/19 (SUPP)) this year to have been a success. In particular, the European Union is heartened by the mutual understanding and cooperation that was achieved amongst delegations. This collaborative spirit significantly contributed to the overall progress achieved during discussions on the improvement of United Nations peacekeeping operations. A streamlined and meaningful 2009 C-34 report, delivered in due time, should provide other United Nations forums with a useful tool for dealing with peacekeeping issues.

The initiative recently launched by France and the United Kingdom within the Security Council, the Australian-Uruguayan workshop on the protection of civilians, Canada's thematic peacekeeping seminars and the New Horizons project constitute an invaluable source of data to enable the C-34 to play its institutional role as the only United Nations mandated forum to consider United Nations peacekeeping in all its aspects. Those discussions should provide a rich source of background information for the C-34's own deliberations on what should be developed to enhance United Nations peacekeeping operations and on what should be asked of the Secretariat and the Secretary-General in preparing the annual report.

The European Union would like to stress the necessity to achieve, in due time, a focused, streamlined and meaningful C-34 report next year. The European Union will continue its efforts to give particular attention to the most pressing and contemporary issues related to current and upcoming peacekeeping operations. In that regard, we recognize the paramount importance of close cooperation with all regional groups and other important players.

The European Union sincerely hopes that its view on the purpose and potential of the C-34 is shared by all those who consider peacekeeping to be a flagship United Nations activity.

In closing, I would like to express thanks on behalf of the European Union to all of the delegations involved in the C-34 substantive session for their contributions to our common United Nations peacekeeping endeavour. I would also like to thank Mrs. U. Joy Ogwu, Permanent Representative of Nigeria, for chairing the C-34 substantive session, as well as Mr. Henri-Paul Normandin, Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada, for his leadership of the ad hoc C-34 Working Group.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position. May I take it that the Assembly decides to conclude its consideration of agenda item 31?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of all the reports of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

Agenda item 48 (*continued*)

Follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development and the preparation of the 2008 Review Conference

Draft decision (A/63/L.71)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to remind members that, at its 74th plenary meeting, on 23 December 2008, the Assembly decided to consider agenda item 48 directly in plenary meeting. Members will also recall that, in resolution 63/277, of 7 April 2009, the General Assembly decided to hold a Conference on the World Financial and Economic

Crisis and Its Impact on Development from 1 to 3 June 2009 at United Nations Headquarters.

The General Assembly has before it a draft decision that has been issued under the symbol A/63/L.71. The Assembly will now take action on the draft decision, entitled "Arrangements and organization of work of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development (New York, 1-3 June 2009)".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/63/L.71?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of Turkey has asked to speak in explanation of position of the draft decision just adopted. I should like to remind him that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats. I call on the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Çorman (Turkey): We believe that the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development is a timely initiative to discuss both the roots of the crisis at the United Nations level and the response of the United Nations in terms of the impact of the crisis on development. We welcome the note (A/63/825) prepared by the Secretariat on the organization of the Conference. However, we would like to place on record a solely organizational concern.

We believe that holding the plenary meetings concurrently with the round tables would pose a difficulty in terms of high-level participation. Since it seems to have been decided already that that is how things will proceed, we are of the opinion that the opening plenary meeting should be arranged in such a way that all high-level participants will have an opportunity to address the plenary of the Conference before the beginning of the round tables. We are aware of the difficulties of imposing time limits on high-level dignitaries, but we believe that the statements during the morning pleaary on 1 June could be restricted to a predetermined length so that all heads of State and Government will be able to address the meeting in its entirety.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

(spoke in English)

I am very pleased to brief the members of the General Assembly today on the preparations for the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, which is scheduled for the first three days of June, as well as to present the first draft of the outcome document. The eve of the Conference is almost upon us — 24 days away, to be precise. We have been preparing for this historic event with remarkable intensity. I wish to explain briefly what has been accomplished to date and to appeal for members' support and involvement in the few short weeks that we have ahead of us.

Let us be united in our efforts to negotiate a powerful outcome document for the summit. Let us be proactive in urging our heads of State and Government to become personally involved and turn this opportunity into the transformative moment in the history of the United Nations that it is meant to be. The participation of all Member States at the highest level is indispensable if that transcendental gathering is to achieve its full potential. I earnestly believe that this is an opportunity that the world cannot afford not to take advantage of.

This United Nations Conference — a global summit of world leaders — is highly unusual for a number of reasons. It is both timely and historic. Unlike other United Nations conferences, we are organizing this gathering in record time, reflecting the need for a timely response to the financial and economic crisis that continues to unfold around us. I understand that this has put a great deal of pressure on Member States, our United Nations colleagues and many other partners who are working overtime to ensure the success of the Conference. But these are not normal times and the world expects us to respond with speed and decisiveness.

As members will remember, at the beginning of this session of the Assembly last September, Member States emphasized the confluence of crises that now challenge the world: the perfect storm of climate change and the food, water and energy crises, as well as the unfolding economic downturn. Meanwhile, economic turmoil was darkening the world horizon. By the time of the Doha Conference, the dimensions of the economic meltdown had become so alarming that

Member States resolved to convene a conference at the highest level to address the crisis.

That was a historic decision that committed us to initiating a global conversation on the crisis, mitigating the impact on the developing countries and addressing the reform of the international economic and financial architecture. Since then, we have worked hard to ensure that the scope of the Conference allows for a full understanding of the various dimensions of the crisis and lets us begin a serious discussion about revamping the international financial and monetary architecture.

In the search for solutions, many members of the General Assembly welcomed my decision to establish a Commission of Experts on Reforms of the International Monetary and Financial System. Twenty experienced economists and central bankers from all regions of the world, under the very able chairmanship of Mr. Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel Laureate, have gathered five times since then to recommend very specific ways to address the immediate and long-term needs of a failing system. When the Commission's recommendations were presented to the General Assembly in a three-day interactive thematic dialogue at the end of March, many Member States confirmed the value of the Commission's work by stating that they found it useful as a comprehensive review of the many issues to be taken up in June and thereafter.

Although extremely important, the Commission's recommendations are, of course, not the only input received. In the past several weeks, we have heard eloquent testimony and received numerous reports from Member States, the President of the Economic and Social Council, other United Nations agencies and programmes, specialized agencies, civil society organizations and the private sector.

Organizing and synthesizing these many inputs has been a major challenge. Capturing the spirit of the moment is an even greater challenge, but one that we cannot avoid. The outcome document that leaders will adopt on 3 June must reflect the aspirations, and not just the work agenda, of the Member States. In particular, it must speak to the hundreds of millions across the globe who have no other forum in which they can express their unique and often divergent perspectives. It must reflect the call of many nations for new paradigms for building a sustainable economic life that integrates the values and the ethical imperatives that should guide our development. It must reflect the call for greater justice and inclusiveness in our global economic life, and it must reflect the passionate call for promoting the common good over the obsessive impulse to consume more and more and to dominate others at any cost.

On Wednesday morning, I received the first complete version of a draft outcome document from the facilitators, Ambassador Frank Majoor of the Netherlands and Ambassador Camillo Gonsalves of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. I want to express my deep appreciation for the work they have done so far. It is immediately evident that, while not having immediate access to all the inputs, they have been extraordinarily diligent in their efforts to prepare a document that fairly and accurately reflects the broad range of views of the membership. Theirs is, therefore, one of the most important inputs into the draft document that I am presenting today.

I believe that the Conference needs to be seen not as an event in itself, but as an inflection point in a long-standing and continuous movement to strengthen the role of the United Nations in global governance. Thus far, in the planning for June, we have agreed to eliminate the restrictions imposed under previous initiatives to limit the scope of our deliberations. That is a significant achievement in itself, but it will mean almost nothing unless we are able to organize an effective mechanism for carrying this agenda forward.

The business of the Conference will not end on 3 June, because the commitments made, both here and elsewhere, will not have been fulfilled on 3 June. It is therefore vitally important that we define a follow-up mechanism that allows Member States to participate in the ongoing work.

A second consideration relates to the level of participation in the Conference. I am certain that every Member State believes that the United Nations is and must be the place where the developing countries can speak in their own voice. However, too often the United Nations itself speaks with the voice of the least-common-denominator consensus.

Unfortunately, such a voice says little to the urgent needs of developing nations. If we can begin only with what is already agreed, it is difficult to see how the Conference or any process that accepts such restrictions could ever be appealing to people who clamour for change, or be conducive to real progress.

In recent weeks, I have been travelling extensively to meet with heads of State and Government and other high-level officials. I can say in all honesty that I have tried my best to reflect in the draft outcome document the concerns and expectations that I have heard expressed in all these meetings. Yet I am quite conscious of the fact that the first version of the document presented to the Member States will be the one that most world leaders will see. I therefore think that it is fair to say that the draft outcome document that I am presenting today will be the basis on which heads of State and Government will decide whether to take the June Conference seriously or to regard it as yet another international charade.

For the many, many nations that have so far been excluded from the multiple ongoing forums and processes in which leading countries are crafting and negotiating their responses to the global crisis, language that sounds like business as usual can only confirm their exclusion. If they do not recognize their concerns and perspectives in this first draft, knowing it will be subject to many compromises going forward, there will be little interest in participating in a meeting that starts from what they quite understandably regard as a feeble premise.

This is no way, in my judgement, to start a global conversation. I have accordingly introduced language that seeks to send a clear signal that the Conference truly is dedicated to understanding and responding to the perspective of the many excluded nations. The only way to do that is to begin with language that truly reflects their concerns and aspirations. Because I come from such a nation and because I have dedicated my entire adult life to overcoming the exclusion of nations and peoples from their rightful participation in our common global life, I have felt responsible for doing what I can to give expression to these views, which, of course, are also my own views.

I trust that Member States will understand that, in exercising my judgement and role, I do not undervalue the very valuable work of all of them, especially the facilitators. I have taken on board most of the structure that they have proposed and nearly all their substantive points. I am personally grateful for the intensive efforts that they have made.

If I have erred in my judgement in what is required to make the Conference successful, then I accept this responsibility. But time and goodwill will determine the ultimate success of our common efforts. I pray that, for the sake of all the world's peoples, we will continue to work hard over the few weeks that remain to find our way forward.

Mr. Majoor (Netherlands): I will speak in my capacities as both Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and as one of the facilitators in brief response, Mr. President, to your introduction of the draft outcome document that you have just presented to us.

As I think the Member States know and all agree, the Conference that you have initiated and that will take place from 1 to 3 June 2009 is an extraordinarily important occasion. It is the occasion at which the United Nations will have the opportunity to speak and to speak out on the financial crisis, on its impact and on the financial architecture as a whole.

When you asked us, Sir, to be a facilitator with respect to that Conference, we were very honoured — at least I was — and, indeed, we have been working since then, and I think in a very cooperative manner, with the Member States towards an inclusive, transparent and Member States-led process. We succeeded first, I believe, in getting the procedures right in terms of resolution 63/277 on the modalities and, later on, on the draft decision that we have just adopted. We are very proud of that.

We then entered into the process of developing a draft outcome document. In that process, we received, apart from the consultations that were held during a number of sessions on the main topics of the Conference, a great number of inputs — obviously, not only the oral inputs, but also written inputs from groups of Member States, individual Member States and relevant meetings that were important in the drafting process, including high-level conferences at the ministerial level. I mention, in particular, the Chairman's summary of the Economic and Social Council, which we received on Monday and which was very helpful, and also, in that context, the relevant paragraphs of the final document of the Non-Aligned Movement ministerial meeting in Havana.

We all took those inputs into consideration, and we are thankful for the input with which Member States provided us. On that basis, the two facilitators — I and Ambassador Gonsalves of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, who unfortunately cannot be here today — started the drafting process together

with the representatives of your office, Sir. I am grateful for that close cooperation between the two facilitators, and with your representatives, in the discussions and the drafting process. We are confident that you were kept abreast of the progress in the drafting that we undertook last week.

During that process, we kept the membership informed of the outline that we were working on and which we were trying to develop, and we believe that we came up with a very coherent and concise document, as was requested of us, that is reflective of all the views that were expressed and could serve as a good basis for constructive negotiations in the limited time available. I should note that, in the course of the process, I think that the Member States also became increasingly constructive in that respect. We were ready with that process early on Tuesday evening. I understand that it reached you on Wednesday morning.

Mr. President, you have now decided to present your own document. The facilitators were not consulted on the document that is now before us. I have yet to see the text, although I see that my colleagues, after a brief look, note that it has changed considerably both in its conciseness and in substance. I think that this is basically a completely different document from that which we put to you.

That procedure and the substantive approach that you have now taken force me, at least, to reconsider, in consultation with my capital, my role in the way forward in that process. I will inform you, and the Member States as a whole, of the results of that reconsideration in due course.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the facilitator, Mr. Majoor, for his remarks. His contribution has been very important and significant. I would prefer that comments on the draft outcome document be made at another time, as it is only now being distributed. I would therefore prefer that we not enter into a debate on something that is unknown. Obviously, however, we will need to do so.

I would like to thank the facilitators for all their work, and I truly hope that the facilitator of the Kingdom of the Netherlands will continue working with us with the same commitment that he has shown to date.

Mr. Palouš (Czech Republic): I am not going to speak about a text that we have not had a chance to read, because we were given this text only a couple of minutes ago. I would, however, like to speak on the process.

The European Union, on whose behalf I speak, has repeatedly expressed its strong interest in doing its utmost to ensure that the June Conference is a success. One precondition for its success is mutual faith, understanding and a spirit of cooperation, which, sadly, are necessary if, Mr. President, we are to tackle the issues that you have rightly described in your opening remarks.

But let me follow up on what the facilitator said about the process. In the letter in which you invited us to this meeting, you mentioned an unauthorized text being circulated among the membership. I must say that I have not seen such a text, and we are confused. We understand that perhaps multiple texts are being circulated. If there is an explanation, we would very much appreciate hearing it.

I would also like to remind you, Mr. President, of your own letter dated 23 March, in which you yourself informed the United Nations membership that the initial draft would be jointly agreed by you and the two facilitators. Now you are explaining to us — and the facilitators are simply confirming — that this text has not been agreed and that it has come to this forum not through the regular intergovernmental process, but by your own initiative.

With all due respect, Mr. President, I would like once again to bring to your attention operative paragraph 9 of resolution 63/277, which requested you, the President of the General Assembly, to present a draft text through an open, transparent and inclusive process led by the Member States. You said that there are now only 24 days until what you called that historic event. I would like to reiterate that we truly are ready to work with you and all Member States to ensure that the event is a success. However, this process raises our most serious concern. With all due respect, Sir, we will have to consult with our capitals to see how we should respond to this type of process.

Mr. Heidt (United States of America): From the outset of our work together on the Conference and on a modalities draft resolution for it, the United States has been very clear about the importance that we attach to the Conference as a way to hear the voices of developing countries on how the financial crisis is impacting their development plans and to develop a

constructive role for the United Nations in the emerging global response to the crisis. We have been very consistent on the point that we view it as an important event.

However, I would like to remind participants that we have spent more than two months on a modalities resolution setting out the way in which we would go about this process together. I will not go into as much detail as some other speakers have, but we are obviously focused on the importance of a transparent process driven by Member States and on the important role of facilitation in that process. I would join the preceding speaker in wanting to know about the important role that your letter of late March played in breaking a deadlock and moving the process forward so that we could get into substance. That was all extraordinarily important.

Unfortunately, Mr. President, the scenario that you have outlined today seems in every way to go against the draft resolution that we negotiated, as well as the terms of your letter from late March, and leaves us feeling very uneasy about how we can possibly pull together a constructive process whereby we can reach an agreement in just over three weeks.

Obviously, today is not the time to get into substance. We will need to review such a lengthy document for a week or 10 days, I imagine, to dig through all those proposals. But I just wanted to register at the outset our concern at the fact that what we had hoped would be a transparent and straightforward process has changed.

Mr. Matussek (Germany): Thank you, Mr. President, for distributing this document, which we have just had the chance to briefly review. I think it would be extremely helpful to the membership if you could share with us the document thus far drafted by the facilitators, so that we can avoid confusion and have a very clear sense of where we stand at the moment.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There is only one document. I believe that one speaker asked whether there were various documents. There is only one document. We have done everything possible to take full account of the very important contributions of the facilitators.

Mr. Morrill (Canada): I am speaking on behalf of the delegations of Canada, Australia and New Zealand — the CANZ delegations. Canada, too, would like to stress the importance that we attach to this event. As a result, Mr. President, we must also note our concern about the process on which you have embarked. We entered into discussions in good faith, provided input to the facilitators and were very impressed with their work and the good faith and balance with which they expressed themselves.

We now have a paper that, as you say, expresses your own views, and we are interested in those views. However, we are concerned lest the work of the Member States — since this is a process driven by Member States — be lost. We echo the view of our German colleagues that it would be very useful for us to have the input of the facilitators distributed.

As others have said, this document, the process by which it was created and the lack of transparency in that process cause us concern. In that light, we will have to consider the manner in which we will participate in the Conference. It is very important that the views of all Member States be considered in our preparations for the Conference.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I can assure the representative of Canada that that is precisely what we have done. I did not claim to express my own opinions, and I am in agreement with those opinions that we have heard. I can also assure the representative of Canada that we have committed ourselves to ensuring that the views of all are taken into account, including the vast majority whose views have never before been taken into account.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to forcefully reiterate, Mr. President, that France attaches great importance to the Conference to be held in early June on your initiative. We believe it essential that the United Nations not only make its voice heard, but also make the proposals, views and positions of all Member States known so as to ensure an effective and equitable response to the financial crisis. As you yourself said, the Conference may be an opportunity for the world to hear the voices of all countries, including those that have had less access to international forums and fewer opportunities to express their concerns.

However, if the Conference is to fully succeed — which is, of course, what France hopes — we must arrive at a consensus on the outcome document. France believes that the best way to achieve that in the present

context is through a transparent and fully intergovernmental procedure, which began with your full cooperation with the facilitators, whom we wish to thank.

The facilitators worked very intensively and held many consultations, and the best way of producing a good basis for discussion is to proceed on the basis of the work of the facilitators. We hope to proceed in that way in the coming weeks in order to maximize our chances of getting a good outcome. From that perspective, I would like, on the one hand, to agree with the concern expressed by other speakers who preceded me, and, on the other, to support the proposal of the Permanent Representative of Germany that we should see the document that was prepared by the facilitators.

Once again, we stand ready to work as hard as we possibly can to ensure a successful conference, but I think we have to remain true to the usual practices of intergovernmental transparency in our negotiations.

Mr. Terzi di Sant' Agata (Italy): Mr. President, I would like to thank you very much for the efforts that you and your collaborators are making to move this difficult process forward. I would like to express the sincere appreciation of my delegation and my authorities to the facilitators who have been working in the same direction in close consultation with all Member States.

I am taking the floor to support and join in the position that has been expressed by the Czech presidency of the European Union, in particular on a couple of points.

The first point is that the process we are in should be carried on — and we know that that is your intention, Mr. President, as has been stated a number of times this morning — but we must remain committed to moving this process forward in full transparency and clarity and through consultations among Member States. If those consultations were facilitated by important colleagues and leading personalities, that would be greatly appreciated. That is, in fact, the basic purpose of the process — to have everybody involved and to be involved with a view to reaching a consensus on a text that could be agreed and supported by everybody in this Hall.

That is extremely important also because the stakes involved and the challenges we have ahead of us are too high to allow for the different Governments that are going to attend the summit in June to have the impression that these decisions were not fully understood or brought to sufficient maturity.

The second point is that we wish to reiterate the call for a text that emanates clearly from the process that has been carried forward until now with the full involvement of the facilitators, and for all delegations to have the opportunity to obtain instructions from their capitals and to concur in the drafting of this very important document.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Clearly, so far, we have seen a fairly strong consistency of expression in the statements made, particularly on the part of the European group.

Mr. Moreno Fernández (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, may I first of all thank you for your statement and for introducing to us the document that has been circulated this morning. I must confess, however, that I am worried for reasons that are completely different from the concerns voiced by preceding speakers.

Indeed, we have heard it said, for example, that we will now need eight to ten days to analyse this document. Others have said that they would have to reconsider their participation in the Conference. At least in the view of my delegation, those ideas are totally inappropriate at this juncture.

If we are truly interested in finding a solution to the crisis and working towards it together, I believe that we should analyse the origins of the crisis and the impact of the crisis. We have no option other than to start working right now and through the days to come on the document now before us, introduced by the President.

I cannot offer a value judgement on the document. I have not read it yet and I cannot say if I support it or not, but what I can say, Mr. President, is that I believe that you have discharged your obligation to offer us a text, and it is now up to us to discharge our responsibilities as representatives of our Governments. It is now time for us to start negotiations and to do so quickly and efficiently.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, we thank you for convening this meeting and for your frank comments. Let me say that we subscribe to the statement made by the representative

of the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union.

Spain feels that it is immensely important that the United Nations work in a united fashion as we face the international economic and financial crisis, and that we do so in a way that promotes convergence in our views and within the broader process that is developing in different international forums and other organs of the Organization, such as the Economic and Social Council, in particular.

As part of that broad process within the United Nations, we feel that it is extremely important that the Conference that we have agreed by consensus to hold in early June, in just a few weeks, be a success. To that end, we will undoubtedly need to ensure respect for the principles of inclusion and transparency so that negotiations are conducted properly in an intergovernmental framework that will allow us to take everyone's contributions into account and reach a result, as I have said, through a consensus of all States Members of the United Nations.

That is why we have supported the work that has been done by the facilitators, Ambassador Majoor of the Netherlands and Ambassador Gonsalves of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Insofar as possible, as I have said, given the circumstances that we find ourselves in, we would like to resume the process that has already begun.

I will not discuss the substance of the document at the moment; there will be time for that. I only wish to note, Sir, as you know well, that we expect to see you in Madrid for the high-level meetings early next week. I am certain that you will hear comments on the substance of the process and of the document presented to us from voices with more authority than mine.

Mr. Abani (Niger), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I wish to thank the President of the General Assembly for all his efforts to bring this important matter before the United Nations. It is a subject of immense importance for the majority of the countries of the South, which make up the large majority of the membership of the Organization. We thank the President also for permitting and continuing to permit our voices to be heard and for making it possible for us to be part of the decision-making process. I also thank the facilitators appointed by the President for their work. The President recommended that they take our recommendations on board. As I understand it, the facilitators have given the President the recommendations, and I am certain that they are included in the document presented to the Assembly today. My delegation has not yet seen the document, but we will study it closely for Monday in order to begin working on it first thing Monday morning.

The President returned to the Chair.

My delegation feels that the crisis requires that we all get together and begin working immediately, without excuses, on the basis of the document that you, Mr. President, have presented. I am certain that, during the process of consultations, all countries will be able to offer their input and that, as is proper, the intergovernmental negotiations based upon the document will begin.

Mr. Solón-Romero (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, my delegation thanks you, Sir, for the document you have presented to us. We wish also to congratulate the facilitators on their work, which made it possible to gather the views of Member States.

We feel that presenting a document that begins the process of negotiation is always a complex process, because it is necessary to synthesize and balance all the various views expressed in the discussion. In our view, the document before us is intended to begin a discussion process. Obviously, it will be added to, corrected and modified throughout the intergovernmental negotiation process.

The fundamental issue for my delegation is to get to the heart of the issue over the next few weeks, and not to lose precious time on issues that could distract us from the main goal that all the peoples of the world want us to achieve: a response and a concrete proposal to address the serious effects of the global economic crisis we are experiencing. Against that backdrop, we believe that it is important to prioritize the study and development of the proposals made in the base document presented today — which we will be studying in great detail.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Sir, for providing the document that we hope will become the basis for the intergovernmental negotiations that we

will soon begin. No delegation, certainly not Venezuela, is familiar with its contents, but thank you for informing us that it includes the contributions of the various institutions that have given assistance and input in this process, which has already begun with the aim of defining a common platform.

Like the Cuban delegation, my delegation is concerned about what appears to be an attempt — or at least what my delegation interprets in that way — to downplay what is most important: the convening of the Conference. Because we are speaking frankly here, we would like to be frank in our comments.

As we all know, when it was decided that it was necessary and timely for the United Nations to consider the global economic and financial crisis, it was deemed appropriate for all countries in this forum to ponder the matter and together to provide alternatives in the face of the terrible crisis facing capitalism, and in particular financial capitalism. Some said at the time that this was not a matter for the United Nations, that it was a matter for the financial experts and the bankers, and that the United Nations had little to do with the terrible situation facing the world. To be sure, we are concerned by some of the statements we heard this morning; there is an attempt to give life to such objections to the United Nations addressing those matters intergovernmentally in order to deal with the economic and financial crisis, with the participation of absolutely every country.

We believe the words of the President, who has told us that his document — whose content, I repeat, we do not know — includes the inputs of the various institutions and bodies, including the inputs of the facilitators. Here, permit me to recall that, according to what Ambassador Camilo Gonsalves said at the recent meeting of the Rio Group, the facilitators' document includes diverse opinions and inputs, but that unfortunately — and that is what Ambassador Gonsalves told us — it could not take into account the views of the Group of 77 and China. In that respect, my delegation appreciates the document presented by the facilitators. We are sure that the document presented by the President is a synthesis of the various inputs.

Venezuela wishes to stress the importance of holding this historic event and of not placing obstacles in its way, or trying to obstruct its convening, or trying to make the intergovernmental negotiations more difficult. On the contrary, all countries — and above all, the developing countries — must be able to participate in the process, because the issues of the economic and financial crisis have hitherto been the purview of the developed countries, and the developing countries until now have not played the role we should play in the process to radically change the world economic and financial structures.

On behalf of Venezuela, I would like to express our support for the positions expressed here. I do so knowing that the document presented by Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, whom we trust and whom we thank for his transparency, includes all the various contributions. It is therefore our opinion that this document should constitute the basis upon which to undertake our negotiations.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): Mr. President, I thank you for your statement and commend you for all the efforts you have made in relation to the United Nations Conference on the world financial crisis. We all have a stake in its successful outcome. A lot of preparatory work has been done with the close interest and support of our capitals, and let us try to work in an atmosphere of harmony, mutual understanding and cooperation so that our efforts will not be in vain.

We believe that prolonging this debate will, in the circumstances, not help bridge our differences. My delegation has taken the floor to propose that the President of the General Assembly meet with the negotiating blocs and the facilitators in order to resolve the differences that appear to have emerged this morning.

Ms. Espinosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will be very brief. My delegation would just like to thank you, Mr. President, for all your efforts to make progress in the preparations for this very important Conference. It is important not just for developing countries, but also for all countries of the world, and particularly for those who are suffering on a daily basis from the negative effects of this crisis: poor people, vulnerable people, the unemployed, women and children living in difficult conditions, not just in developing countries, as I said, but throughout the world.

We also thank you very much for presenting the document before us today, Sir. We will send it straightaway to our capitals, and we are more than prepared to move ahead in a constructive

intergovernmental negotiation process. We would also like to thank the facilitators for their broad and professional work to include the proposals, opinions and ideas of Member States that, we understand, have been passed on to you, Sir.

I call on all my colleagues and States Members of this Organization to keep in mind that we only have 24 days to negotiate this document. We have, I believe, an ethical responsibility to do so, because, as I said, those who are really feeling the brunt of this crisis are poor and vulnerable people throughout the entire world. The unemployment crisis, for example, is affecting not just developing countries, but everyone. That is why my delegation reiterates its appeal that we begin our work in a responsible, open and constructive manner as soon as possible.

Once again, I thank you, Sir, for the document you introduced to us today. As I said, my delegation is fully prepared to work tirelessly to put the 24 days before the Conference to optimal use.

Mr. Ali (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by joining my voice to those of Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela. I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for the efforts that you have made in the consultative process from its very inception. I would also like to thank the two facilitators for their efforts during this process. My delegation feels that you, Sir, have effectively accomplished your task in this preparatory phase of the upcoming conference. We feel that the ball is now in the court of the Member States.

Consequently, I think it is incumbent upon us to go forward with negotiations on the document that you, Sir, have distributed to us today. We feel that the distribution of another document will just complicate the entire negotiating procedure. I would like to remind Member States that we are not here to adopt this document at this meeting. Therefore, all of the opinions concerning the document before us, as it is at the moment, must be expressed during the negotiations that will take place at the appropriate time. We hope that those negotiations will begin early next week.

Mr. Di-Aping (Sudan): Thank you, Mr. President, for presenting us with the first draft of this document for our consideration. I am going to say a few things. First of all, let me thank the facilitators — all three of them, because there is continuity in this process. I have attended all the consultations and the discussions that were held by the facilitators and your office, Sir, during the past couple of weeks. Great effort has been dedicated to that.

However, I do believe that we should not come to conclusions about this document before we really read it very carefully and see whether it reflects the contributions of all Member States and the different inputs, be they from Mr. Stiglitz, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development or the Economic and Social Council, inter alia.

What is equally clear here is that we have a propensity, in this place, to undermine our own efforts in participating in finding solutions and leading. It is about time that we rise above our small differences and concentrate on substance. As such, I do appeal to the facilitators, one of whom is not here — and I have not heard his perspective — to not take any of this as a personal affront. If there are mistakes in the process, they should be corrected. The document that you have presented, Mr. President, should be evaluated on its merits as to whether it is taking us in the right direction towards addressing a crisis that everyone agrees must be addressed. I say that because I am also cognizant of one remarkable peculiarity about the United Nations, namely, that many missions sometimes voice a different perspective from that of their leadership.

It is too early for us to make any substantive comment. I think it is not wise, as the saying goes, to throw the baby out with the bathwater. I do believe that we need to really concentrate on the substance and on what takes us forward. If there are issues that need to be addressed, they should be addressed. I can understand the frustration of Ambassador Majoor and that he feels that he has not been consulted, but, to be frank, that is not reason enough for people to come to the conclusion that the document itself has no merit.

I equally think that no nation should have the right to simply threaten. Of course, one is entitled to one's views, but let us sit down and discuss the substance of the issues and address what it is that went wrong and how we should correct it, in the interest of the millions, if not billions, of people who are being affected by this crisis, whether in the United States, Europe or developing countries.

Mr. Onemola (Nigeria): Thank you, Mr. President, for your presentation of the draft document. Let me also take this opportunity to thank the two facilitators for the work they have done. My comments will be very brief.

My delegation has not read the document that has been presented to us. However, I have heard the comments of some delegations. At this stage, I would not want us to prejudge the document. We should give each and every Member State time to read to document before we come back to it.

That being said, despite the grievances that have been expressed, we think we can still correct any mistakes that may have occurred. In my part of the world, it is when the king is dead and the house is on fire that we think everything is beyond correction. But we are not yet at that stage. I would therefore like to appeal to all parties to look into the document, and especially to consider the plight of the ordinary people which the document aims to address. We are aware of the enormous crisis that this issue represents in virtually every part of the world. It is in that regard that we should step back and ensure that the spirit in which the Organization has worked in the past to produce many documents through international cooperation prevails.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation would like to express its appreciation for your sincere efforts so far, Mr. President, as well as for those of the facilitators to take everyone's ideas onboard.

Having the United Nations address the crisis is of great importance for all of us, not only because of its severe impacts on the daily lives of our peoples but also because of the role that the Organization should play in that regard, on which our people expect it to deliver.

We are therefore of the same view as you, Mr President, that there should be a comprehensive approach and full participation by all. The text you have presented today in that regard is a draft for negotiations that can serve as a basis for discussions in the coming weeks. Actually, today's draft is based on what has been discussed by the facilitators, but it also includes further inputs from the President's meetings with heads of States during his visits to various countries. It therefore includes a combination of views that I think should be the basis for negotiations in the coming weeks.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, my delegation would like to acknowledge and express its gratitude for all the efforts you have made, Mr. President, to draft and introduce the document on the organization of the Conference to be held in early June. We thank all those who have contributed to that document, in particular the facilitators.

We view the President's document as being neither a repudiation of nor a substitution for the facilitators' document. We will study the document that has been provided to us this morning and will announce our position on its contents.

We agree with the President that developing countries are those suffering the most from this crisis and that they will continue to do so. We also agree that the concerns and hopes of those countries should be taken into account in any documents emanating from the Conference.

Having said that, we must nevertheless not forget two basic points. First, this is an intergovernmental multilateral body. Secondly, all of us want a consensus outcome to the June Conference. My delegation has drawn the conclusion that all of us without exception are bound to work together to focus on the substantive, regardless of where the ideas originate. Nothing should divert us from that goal. As some of my colleagues have said, I too acknowledge that time is short. However, experience has shown that, regardless of that fact, if there is a desire to succeed and a willingness to accommodate each others' views, it is possible to achieve the desired results.

At the most recent meeting in Geneva on the Durban Review Conference, we had an outstanding example of the spirit of compromise and consensus, the result of which was welcomed by everyone — and I stress by everyone. Let us show the same flexibility, openness and political willingness here, because in this crisis, we are all in the same boat and we are all suffering. Some are suffering more than others, but we are all suffering and will suffer to some degree from this crisis. Let us therefore ensure that we have a consensual, collective reaction to it, and let us not disappoint the millions — if not billions — of people who are awaiting a signal from the Assembly on this very delicate and important subject.

Mrs. Intelmann (Estonia): Thank you, Mr. President, for sharing your views on the upcoming Conference, which will most certainly be a major event. We take this opportunity to also thank the facilitators for the work that they have been so ably doing.

My delegation is looking forward to an open and transparent intergovernmental process, which we very much hope will bring us to a consensus on the outcome. However, given the present circumstances and the nature of today's discussion, I think that the representative of Ghana has just made a very valid proposal that a meeting be held between you, Sir, the facilitators and the major negotiating groups to agree on the way forward in terms of procedure. There is not much time, and let me assure you, Sir, of my delegation's constructive spirit in this process.

Mr. Gálvez (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I think it is fortuitous that I am speaking after the representative of Estonia, because I wanted to speak in the same vein as her.

I believe that the representative of Venezuela spoke very aptly when he said that the United Nations has a lot to say on such issues as the economic crisis that we are in the midst of, and certainly more generally on economic and financial matters. Such issues should not be relegated to the private sector or to other entities, although they also have a relevant role to play. However, we believe that the United Nations has a lot to say on these issues, since it has certain mechanisms, procedures and ways of doing things that we feel are very transparent and democratic. That makes a difference.

Therefore, my delegation believes that our current discussion — which is not on the substance or the content of the document, since none of us has read it, but is simply procedural — is incredibly valuable and represents the heart of what the United Nations is. We believe that the United Nations should work on this issue as it does on others, helping to build bridges and promote reconciliation. In this regard, respect for the mechanisms that we have to work with in an open and intergovernmental manner is essential and fundamental.

I do not believe that we will achieve a successful outcome at the June Conference if we begin with divisions over procedural matters such as we are seeing now. We would not only not be able to help but would probably even harm the United Nations in that respect. Accordingly, I would like to support the statements made by the representatives of Ghana, Estonia and other delegations. It is necessary and important that we correct the procedural issues before we turn to the actual issues of substance.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no further speakers on my list. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 48. I would like to thank all for having participated so actively in this meeting.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.